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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 ANKARA 005223

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TAGS: TU PGOV PINS PREL

SUBJECT: DAS BRYZA'S AUGUST 25-26 VISIT TO TURKEY

REF: A. ANKARA 4965

1B. STATE 121751

Classified By: CDA Nancy McElđowney, E.O. 12958, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d) .

11. (C) Summary: DAS Bryza attended a series of positive meetings with Turkish officials to promote a renewed strategic partnership between the US and Turkey. While noting that the U.S.-Turkish relationship is broad and multidimensional, Turkish interlocutors repeatedly stressed the importance of the Iraq and PKK issues and warned that the perception of continued USG inaction against the PKK is undermining popular support for the U.S. in Turkey. End Summary.

MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER GUL

12. (C) In his meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Gul, DAS Bryza outlined his vision for a shared U.S.-Turkish strategic partnership. Gul, in turn, emphasized the importance of the U.S.-Turkish relationship and asserted that good USG-GOT relations would benefit the entire world.

13. (C) Gul expressed his concerns regarding the PKK and the situation in Iraq. He is worried that the new constitution has opened the door to the Kurds seizing Kirkuk and fears that this will unbalance a delicate situation and fuel extremism. Gul also encouraged the USG to strengthen the hands of the Sunni minority in Iraq; he claimed that the Sunnis are naturally closer to U.S. and Turkish values and the Iraqi Shiites, in contrast, are "narrow-minded and extremist". Gul warned Bryza that PKK terrorist operations are fueling anti-Americanism in Turkey because the Turkish public is increasingly associating the U.S. with the PKK's resurgence. Bryza underscored that the United States was working against the PKK terrorists in Europe and Iraq through the trilateral process. Efforts in Iraq should proceed from our shared interests in a unified Iraq with a sovereign government, which meant Ankara and Baghdad should work on the PKK directly with each other, with the United States playing a supporting role.

14. (C) Gul said Turkey is grateful for the USG's help on Turkey's EU-membership bid. Gul claimed that Turkey's strategy is to do everything asked in the run up to October 31. Bryza encouraged the GOT to show restraint in responding to the EU's expected counter-declaration to Turkey's July 28 statement of non-recognition of Cyprus. (Comment: Gul is exaggerating. The GOT has redlines it is unwilling to cross at this stage, e.g. recognition of Cyprus. End Comment.)

MFA ON US-TURKISH RELATIONS, PKK, AND IRAQ

15. (C) Deputy U/S Apakan said Turkey wants to develop and broaden its bilateral agenda with the U.S. The MFA is in the process of drafting a list which will provide the U.S. side with suggested bilateral working groups. DAS Bryza welcomed the expanded dialogue and said the U.S aim is to produce tangible results.

16. (C) Apakan called the U.S. paper on addressing the PKK problem in Europe "useful" and said the MFA is evaluating it. He noted that the paper "addresses one aspect" of the PKK problem; the other aspect is the PKK in Northern Iraq. There is "no substitute for action" against the PKK in Iraq. Apakan suggested the U.S. provide a paper with a timetable for steps to cope with the PKK on the ground in Iraq. Apakan said there has been no change on that score since the August 6 trilateral meeting: PKK infiltration from Iraq to Turkey is unchanged; PKK flags still fly in Iraq; PKK leaders still move about freely.

17. (C) DDG for Security Affairs Bicakli said Turkey has given Iraqi authorities 137 Interpol "red notices" for PKK members. International agreements and law require the Iraqis to

arrest on this basis, but they have refused. DAS Bryza pointed out that Iraqi authorities said they need court files before they can arrest. He urged the Turkish side to provide the documentation the Iraqis want and which the Turkish side agreed to provide during trilateral talks, thereby removing an obstacle to the extradition process. Bryza also promised that the U.S. would urge Iraqi authorities to arrest PKK members.

18. (C) Middle East DDG Celikkol reiterated Turkish concerns that the draft Iraqi Constitution will allow Kirkuk to become part of the KRA (ref A) and asked that the U.S. use its influence to prevent this. DAS Bryza replied that the U.S. shared concerns about Kirkuk. At the same time, we support Iraqi sovereignty and want to avoid dictating details in the constitution drafting process. However, Bryza said we would communicate with the Iraqis on this point and urged Turkey to do so as well.

19. (C) Celikkol said the MFA has been in contact with all Iraqi groups; for example, it recently hosted a mixed Sunni and Shia delegation from Talafar. Celikkol claimed the MFA consistently tells Iraqi groups to participate in the political process and not support armed resistance.

MFA ON ISRAEL/PALESTINE, CAUCUSUS, AND GREECE, CYPRUS

110. (C) Celikkol called recent developments between Israel and Palestine "encouraging" and said PMs Erdogan and Sharon had spoken by telephone twice recently. The two FMs will meet in New York. Celikkol said Turkey had offered a security expert to assist in training PA security services but the U.S. told the GOT to speak directly to the PA about this. Celiikol said Turkey will supply what it can to the PA security sector (ref B).

111. (C) Caucasus DDG Karslioglu told Bryza Turkey is monitoring the run up to Azeri elections, including being in touch with the opposition, whom they are encouraging to "play by democratic rules." Turkey is also urging the Azeris to accept reasonable Armenian offers to settle Nagorno-Karabakh; he urged similar U.S. pressure on Armenia. The GOT is taking the Kars/Tbilisi railroad idea "seriously," Karslioglu added. Bryza suggested considering the merits of the Kars/Guymri proposal as well, as a possible sweetener for a Nagorno-Karabakh framework agreement.

112. (C) Northeastern Mediterranean Affairs DG Uman said Turkish/Greek relations are progressing. He highlighted trade, tourism and energy cooperation, and noted Aegean and Cyprus issues have been "compartmentalized, with exploratory talks on the Aegean continuing at the U/S level. Uman noted that Greece has made a "strategic decision" to support Turkey's EU candidacy. The Turks expect PM Karamanlis to reschedule his postponed visit to Turkey. (Note: Greek First Secretary Touloupas confirmed August 29 the postponement was

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for scheduling reasons, not politics. End Note.)

113. (C) Apakan requested that the U.S. urge Greece not to insert stronger Aegean text into the EU Negotiating Framework; he claimed the current text had been proposed by the Greeks in December. Bryza outlined U.S. efforts to work with Greece and other EU members states on this and other issues related to the October 3 start of EU accession talks with Turkey.

114. (C) Northeastern Mediterranean DDG Bilman said he anticipates short and medium term problems with Cyprus in the context of Turkey's EU accession process. Cyprus-related text in the Negotiating Framework is "already unbearable" for Turkey, Bilman added. He predicted any further changes will jeopardize Turkish parliamentary ratification of the Ankara Agreement extension protocol, not just with the opposition, but also among ruling AKP MPs. Apakan added that an EU counter-declaration about Cyprus recognition would, in effect, become part of the acquis. Bryza encouraged the GOT to demonstrate restraint in responding to the EU counter-declaration.

115. (C) Apakan and Bilman expressed appreciation for U.S. measures for Turkish Cypriots and asked that those efforts continue.

DIRECTORATE OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS (DIYANET)

116. (C) Bryza told Mehmet Gormez, Diyanet vice president, that he recognizes that Turkey, with its unique history, cannot serve as a "model" for other Muslim countries, but could nonetheless provide "inspiration." Bryza said Turkey

permits religious diversity while at the same time controlling Islamic extremism. The Diyanet, with its program of carefully training state-employed imams, deserves much of the credit. Bryza said he would like to learn how the Diyanet accomplishes this, especially with regard to helping Turkish emigrants remain connected to their Turkish culture, thereby avoiding the alienation that plagues many other Muslim immigrant communities (especially Moroccan and Algerian) in Europe.

¶17. (C) Gormez said the Diyanet is a unique institution, and he has had a difficult time explaining its role to representatives of foreign governments. He said the Diyanet is an integral part of Turkey's secular democratic system. The institution began as the agency responsible for overseeing Islamic worship in Turkey. In the 1960s, when Turks began immigrating to Europe and elsewhere, the Diyanet branched out and began providing services to Turks abroad. Gormez said that despite the rise of radical Islam in Europe, no Diyanet mosque in Europe has been connected to any terrorist organizations. Nevertheless, he said, the Europeans have never expressed appreciation for the positive role the Diyanet has played.

¶18. (C) Bryza noted that he would be traveling to Athens, and asked whether he could ask the Greek Government to take any steps that would enable the GOT to re-open the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Halki Seminary, closed by the Turkish state in 1971. Gormez claimed that the Muslim minority in Thrace faces greater restrictions on religious freedom than Turkey's Greek Orthodox. He said the 1923 Lausanne Treaty establishes reciprocal rights for the two communities. As a religious scholar, he said, he does not agree with the idea that the rights of Greek Orthodox Turkish citizens should be tied to the rights of a minority living in another country. However, he said, Lausanne places certain legal restrictions on Turkey. (Note: Gormez's comments about Lausanne are standard GOT arguments, although a number of scholars disagree with this interpretation of the treaty. End Note.)

TURKISH GENERAL STAFF

¶19. (C) DAS Bryza called on the new TGS J5, MG Hilmi Akin Zorlu, on Aug. 26. (Note: Zorlu was officially promoted to LTG Aug 30. End Note.) Zorlu noted Iraq's status as the center of the GWOT, and urged the U.S. to work for a democratic and secular state in Iraq, though he acknowledged the latter "may take some time." He emphasized the need for Iraqis to identify themselves as Iraqis first and a member of an ethnic group (Kurd, Arab) or sect second. Zorlu asserted that the PKK moves freely in northern Iraq, including raising its front party's flag in major cities, and asked "how can Barzani and Talabani permit this?" He asked the U.S. to use its influence with the Iraqi Kurds to limit the PKK's freedom of movement and ability to infiltrate Turkey to carry out attacks. Bryza responded that we do discuss the PKK frequently with the Iraqi Kurds, some of whom seem to understand that the PKK issue may come back to hurt them if they do not act to counter this terrorist threat. Additionally, we are using the trilateral process to increase the Iraqis' capacity to deal with this problem.

¶20. (C) Bryza outlined planned increased USG efforts to use diplomatic, law enforcement, and intelligence assets to work with Turkey on building cases against PKK terrorists and operatives in Europe. Zorlu said he appreciated these efforts. He contrasted long-standing U.S.-Turkey cooperation on terrorism with Turkey's more troubled relationship with many European countries.

NSC SECGEN ALPOGAN ON CYPRUS AND IRAQ

¶21. (C) NSC SecGen Yigit Alpogan noted his appreciation for US efforts to maintain EU member state support for the Oct. 3 start of Turkey's EU accession negotiations. He stated that if the EU imposes new conditions, Turkey will not be able to continue discussions, adding that popular support for the EU in Turkey has dropped from 76 percent to 69 percent in recent months. He claimed the EU would not respond negatively to Turkey's declaration of non-recognition of southern Cyprus, saying that there has been "EU silence. No problems. No issues." Turkey is working to ensure there will be "smooth sailing" at the COREPER and subsequent Gymnich.

¶22. (C) Alpogan said he advised the Greek Patriarch in Istanbul that there would be no movement on Patriarchate issues until after Oct. 3. He opined that there is "no hope for Papadopolous" and said Turkey would do nothing to recognize southern Cyprus before the start of talks. He dismissed the idea that Papadopolous was looking for a quiet

way to re-engage in discussions on the Annan Plan. Bryza -- recognizing that the two issues were unrelated -- queried whether Turkey might respond positively to a Greek action to permit the opening of several mosques on western Thrace. Alpogan agreed that the two issues were unrelated but grudgingly affirmed the possibility of a positive response. He also acknowledged the possibility of implementing parts of FM Gul's Cyprus proposal in the absence of agreement on the entire plan, assuming buy-in from the non-governmental community.

123. (C) On Iraq, Alpogan asked whether the US proposal for action against the PKK in Europe signaled a shift of US attention away from northern Iraq. Bryza explained the two-track US approach, saying the US would need to work with Turkey to make the case to European countries on the need to close Kurdish stations like Roj TV in Denmark; to arrest PKK leaders; and close down financial networks. At the same time, the planned Sept. 8-9 meeting between US Generals Jones and Abizaid and Chief of the Turkish General Staff Ozkok provides an opportunity to discuss northern Iraq. Bryza emphasized the integral role of the Iraqi government in any action, the goal of which would be to eliminate an element that threatens the stability of the country. He understood the importance to the US and Turkey of a sovereign, democratic Iraq. Alpogan reiterated Turkey's desire for "one, small, tangible act," such as the capture of a few important and well-known PKK leaders, to demonstrate US solidarity with Turkey.

PRESS BRIEFINGS

124. (SBU) Bryza held two on-the-record sessions with senior representatives of the Turkish media. His comments on the PKK issue, Cyprus/EU, and discussions at the Diyanet generated broad, and mostly positive, coverage. Key newspapers such as Sabah and Milliyet focused on Bryza's "new initiative" to go after PKK terrorists, PKK-affiliated media outlets, and PKK fund-raising in Europe. Although Milliyet argued that Bryza's remarks showed that there is "nothing really new" in US policy on the PKK, most reports were more positive. In a front-page story on August 26, Sabah praised the U.S. commitment to "move into action" against the PKK in Europe. Bryza's comments on his discussions at the Diyanet were misinterpreted by the Turkish daily Aksam, which claimed that Bryza was advocating that the U.S. and Europe become involved in training imams. Most press accounts correctly reported Bryza's statements that he was seeking information from the Diyanet on how imams are trained in Turkey and how the Diyanet interacts with Turkish migrants in European countries. Bryza's stand-up appearance with diplomatic correspondents following his series of meetings at the MFA was carried live by several Turkish media outlets, including the news channels NTV and CNN-Turk. He stressed the breadth of the U.S.-Turkish bilateral relationship, and argued that the relationship had rebounded from a difficult period earlier this year. His comments at the MFA were carried widely and accurately in most Turkish papers the following day. Bryza's visit was a significant net plus in our efforts to achieve more positive media coverage of U.S. policy and U.S.-Turkish relations in recent months.

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